

Death in the Pot!

by Duane Troyer

This sermon emphasizes the importance of discernment and trust in God amidst a world filled with poisonous influences and fear-inducing stories. It highlights the need to rely on Christ, the Bread of Life, to protect us from harmful ideas and to combat evil surmisings, fear, and anger. The message encourages spreading the good news of salvation and trusting in God's mercy and strength, rather than succumbing to worldly fears and distractions.

Scripture: 2 Kings 4:38, 1 John 4:18, Psalms 118:1

Topics: "Discernment", "Trust in God's Protection"

Description

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Transcript

Well, greetings, everybody, in Jesus' name. It's really good to be here, and really good to see everybody in an assembly like this, again. And yeah, my heart goes out to those who can't be here for illness, ailments, or other physical hindrances from being here.

And so let's not forget them. I'm sure they'd be glad to be here. Let's stand for prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank you, praise you for this opportunity that we have to be here, and to be alive, and well. We thank you for healthy bodies, and sound minds, and all the many gifts that you give us, that you care about us. Thank you for salvation in the Lord Jesus.

And thank you for this opportunity to be together. We pray for Buddy, and his backache, and his family. Be with them.

Brother Rick, be with him. Heal him from his sickness. And we pray for Brother Max and his family, as well.

Keep them all in your special care today. Help us now, as we look into your word. Help us to have eyes that see, and ears that hear, and a heart that understands.

Pray, Lord, that you convict us of all evil, and help us to walk in the ways of righteousness. That your will be done, and your kingdom come. Yours is the power, and glory forever.

Amen. Amen. Let's maybe start by, I don't know, admitting, or confessing, or whatever, that I'm not as prepared as I wish I was.

I don't know. It seems like I always, or have for the last quite a while, just always have this problem when I work on preparing a message, or something. I just can't really get into gear, or seemingly be really inspired until the last minute.

And then I don't have much time left. But anyway, that's fine. The Lord has his way.

I don't know if that's the Lord's doing, or if it's some of my laziness, or lack of motivation sometimes. But your prayers are appreciated in those areas. I'm going to start by reading in 2 Kings, I believe it is, a story about Elisha.

It's 4th Kingdoms, if you have a Septuagint. 2nd Kings in the Masoretic text, chapter 4. 2nd Kings, chapter 4, and verse 38. Then Elisha returned to Gilgal, and there was a famine in the land.

Now the sons of the prophets were sitting before him, and Elisha said to his servant, put on the large pot, and boil some pottage for the sons of the prophets. So one went out into the field to gather herbs. He found a wild vine, and gathered from it a lap full of wild gourds, and threw them into the pot of soup.

Though they did not know what they were, then they served it to the men to eat. Now as they were eating the vegetables, they cried out and said, man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat it.

So he said, take wheat flour and throw it in the pot. Then Elisha said to his servant Gehazi, serve it to the people and let them eat. Thus there was no longer anything harmful in the pot.

So here we are in the land of Canaan, the land of milk and honey, the land that God had promised that if his people would walk in his ways, he would give them fruitful yields. And there was great and many promises, but they had fallen away so many times. And there was a famine in the land.

There was a drought. There was probably not much food available. But Elisha's gathered the sons of the prophets, which the best of my understanding is like people he was discipling, people kind of in his school, you might say.

And he was gathered with them somewhere there. And they were hungry. And they put on a pot to boil up some pottage for everybody.

And it doesn't say who, but someone went out. There was probably not much available. But he found this plant, this wild vine that had gourds on it.

And whether he was careless, whether the plant really looked like a good plant and he just mistook it, or whether he just didn't have much knowledge about that thing, or however it was, we don't know. But he gathered a lap full of these wild gourds. And he brings and he throws them in the pot.

And everyone started eating it. And it was poisonous. He said, man of God, there is death in the pot.

There is poison in the pot. And Elisha instructed either his servant or someone to throw in some flour, some meal, some ground up, I suppose, ground up wheat or barley or something, some ground up grain. And throw it in the pot.

And they threw it into this pot. And then he said, eat of it. Those poisonous gourds were still in there.

And he said, eat of it. And everybody ate. And it did no harm to them.

That's pretty amazing. And I don't know just what all people could learn from this story spiritually. But I wrote a paraphrase for this account that I'll read.

And I think you'll get it. Then Elisha returned to the earth. And there was a worldwide pandemic in the earth.

Now the sons of the prophets were sitting before him. And Elisha said to his servants, put on the large council pot, and we'll boil up some food for thought for all the sons of the prophets. And so one went out into YouTube and social media to gather information.

And he found some wild stories. And he gathered from it a lap full of wild ideas and threw them into the pot. And though he did not fact check them or verify it or check whether it was from a reliable source, then they presented it to the men to think about.

And now as they were chewing on it, they cried out and said, oh, man of God, there is death in the pot. They could not bear it. So Elisha said, take the bread of life and eat it with the rest of those ideas.

And they ate. And there was nothing harmful anymore. I think it's pretty easy to gather up a lot of wild gourds these days.

But as I read that last night, something just came to me, kind of about that story that I had never really thought about before. And there are things that people hear that will strike them with something that will lead to death, where somebody else can hear, who has Christ or who has the bread of life and it does no harm to them. There's stories that can be spread that are meant.

They are meant by the enemy to strike fear into a person's heart. They are meant to bring a people into a dark cloud and to bind us with anxiety and worry and discouragement and depression and bind us and drag us just deeper and deeper into the pit of despair. And oh, man of God, there is death in the pot.

But if we have Christ, if we have the bread of life, we can hear that same story. We can hear the same idea. And it has no harmful effects on us.

Because we believe and we trust in the one who has conquered sin and death and rose victorious and gives us the promise of eternal life. We hear the one who says, I will never leave you nor forsake you, and therefore we can confidently say the Lord is my helper. I shall not be afraid.

What will man do to me? He hears and he trusts the one who says that you are my sheep and I am your shepherd and no man can pluck you out of my hands. That's how safe and secure we can be. Fear is a powerful thing.

It can just really grip people and drive them to places where they have no reason to go to. I remember when I was young and I had a vivid imagination and I would go to my bedroom at night and I would run for

my bed and before I got there, I'd jump into it just in case there was something under the bed. And I see my same children do foolish things because they're afraid.

Some of them are afraid of the dark. Some of them are simply afraid of if the curtains are back when it gets dark because that dark window looks scary. We just don't know what's on the other side and it scares us.

Fear is really powerful. Salesmen use this. It's one of the most effective tactics of salesmen.

If you can strike someone into fear, you can sell them a lot of stuff. If you can make them afraid that they're going to lose out or miss out or that their competitors are going to leave them in the dust, you can sell anything from food to fire extinguishers to gadgets on your vehicles or whatever if you can make somebody afraid that if they don't have this thing, they're in real danger. And so fear does that, the phobia kind of fear.

It can bind us. In 1 John 4.18, he says, there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear involves punishment. And the one who fears is not perfected in love.

Christ, who is the bread of life, is also the perfection of love. And we can hear this same story that makes the whole world go into a frenzy and fear, and we can have it or eat it, and it does no harm to us. Just like that pottage no longer harmed the sons of the prophets after they threw the meal in there.

But fear is far from the only poisonous gore that's out there. There's a lot of wild gores and wild stories out there that when some people hear them, they immediately jump to conclusions, to evil surmisings, to suspicions, to distrust. The word evil surmising simply means wicked speculations.

In 1 Timothy 6.4, he talks about something about people who dote about questions and things they don't know about and come to evil surmisings. It's a sin. We commit the sin of evil surmising when we think or imagine that others are involved in wrongdoing without reason or evidence to do so.

It's so easy to do that. And it is meant to bring us into bondage. It is meant to bring us into this dark cloud where the devil binds us with suspicion and mistrust and slander and lying and gossiping and drags us deeper into the pit of confusion and dissension and division.

And oh, man of God, there is death in the pot. But with Christ, with that fine flour or that bread of life, we can hear the same story. And it has no harmful effects on us.

We believe the one whose word says, whatsoever things are true and honest and of good report and lovely and peaceful, think on those things. And the one who says, be wise to the good and simple to the evil, who said we should bring every thought into captivity and that we should prove all things and hold fast that which is good, the one who already told us that there will be rumors and rumors of wars and there will be seducers and they'll wax worse and worse, who has warned us of all these things and still says but be of good cheer of overcome the world. There's nothing wrong with some healthy skepticism and to not just be gullible and believe things.

I don't always trust what is called scientifically proven or scientific evidence. But there is a difference about being cautiously skeptical of a report till it's proven or peddling our thoughts and theories that are unproven at the accusation of a person or a group with basically no evidence to do so. Brothers and sisters, that's slander.

We as Christians ought to live by a higher standard when it comes to making accusations, whether it be against government, against the media, against the doctors, or against the scientists. We should be coming here. And if we have some good healthy skepticism, that's good.

But we can wait. We can be silent. We can wait until things are proven before we hurl out accusations, lest we be found worse as a slander or a false accuser or one peddling lies.

People like secrets. People like to be mystified. People like mystery novels.

Hidden things fascinate us. To believe in lurking evils allows us to wrap ourselves in the security blanket of innocence. It's the classic lure of victimhood.

We suspect people of trickery. We assume the common belief cannot be real. But as Elmo Stoll once said, nothing is more confusing than the clamor of armchair doctors and sofa scientists.

I've watched this kind of thing go around in my life with Y2K, with the blood moons, with the Mayan calendars, and with CERN. And the more mysterious something is, the more it feeds someone who is inclined toward evil surmising. And the more poisonous the gourd, the more deadly the pot.

When will we ever learn? There's other poisonous gourds. Some stories are out there, and they make a person feisty and fighty. And he gets all worked up, and he gets brought into this bondage in this cloud where the devil binds him in anger and hatred and envy and digs him deeper into the pit of vengeance.

And oh, man of God, there is death in the pot. But with Christ, we can hear the same story with no harmful effects. Because we believe and we trust in the one who said, my kingdom is not of this world.

If my kingdom was of this world, my servants would fight. And he said, his kingdom will not be shaken. Once everything else is shaken, his kingdom will not be shaken.

We can trust and rest in that. We also believe the one who told us, seek not revenge, for vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord.

And we can lay these things at his hands. I'm sure there would be many others we could think of. Many other wild and poisonous gourds that people throw into that pot.

And I would be delighted to hear your thoughts on those. But I want to say that in case anyone thinks that what I'm saying today is that we shouldn't fear, and we shouldn't spread stories, and we shouldn't fight, I want to tell you that that's not what I'm saying. In spite of the promises that no external forces can remove us from Christ, no man can pluck us out of his hands.

Paul says, I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor power, nor height, nor depth, nor any created thing can separate us. In spite of those great and precious promises, there is one to fear. What does he also say that he will do with the unprofitable servant? Maybe no external force can remove the unprofitable servant, but what does he say he does? He casts him out.

Or what about the unfruitful branch? He cuts it off. Or the lukewarm person? He spits him out. The one who forsakes him, if we forsake him, God will forsake us.

Fear him, who has power to destroy both body and soul in hell. And there is lots of news to spread, brothers and sisters. We ought to be spreading it far and wide and from the housetops, and it has little to do with the current pandemic.

It's about the goodness of the life that we can have in Christ, the bread of life, the life that we can have more abundantly. It is about the deliverance from every form of death in the pot. It's news about the salvific properties of the ground-down flour that is the true bread of life.

That is news we should be spreading. And I am definitely not saying that we should not fight. We ought to fight the good fight, not with carnal weapons, but with mighty weapons.

We should be pulling down those strongholds, not those strongholds of earthly governments and nuclear weapons and viral outbreaks, but the strongholds of fortresses, of imaginations, of speculations, of fears, and of lusts, and all the things that surround us that separate us from the knowledge of God. Fight against them with fury. We can easily get distracted from what we should be doing by letting our imaginations go wild and gathering up wild gourds from wild vines.

And I just want to encourage us not to do so. And I'm going to close reading Psalms 118 in the Masoretic Text, 117 in the Septuagint. I'm going to read it.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever. Let the house of Israel say that he is good, for his mercy endures forever. Let the house of Aaron say that he is good, for his mercy endures forever.

Let all who fear the Lord say that he is good, for his mercy endures forever. In affliction I called upon the Lord, and he heard me in a broad place. The Lord is my helper.

I shall not be afraid of what men do to me. The Lord is my helper. I shall look upon my enemies.

It is good to trust the Lord, rather than to trust in man. It is good to hope in the Lord, rather than to hope in rulers. All the nations surrounded me, but in the name of the Lord I defended myself against them.

They circled and surrounded me, but in the name of the Lord I defended myself against them. They surrounded me like bees around a honeycomb, and they were inflamed like fire in a thorn bush, but in the name of the Lord I defended myself against them. I was shoved and disheartened that I might fall, but the Lord took hold of me, and the Lord is my strength and my song, and he became my salvation.

The sound of exceeding joy and salvation is in the tents of the righteous. The right hand of the Lord worked its power. The right hand of the Lord exalted me.

The right hand of the Lord worked its power. I shall not die, but live and tell the Lord's works. The Lord chastened and corrected me, but he did not give me up to death.

Upon the gates of righteousness to me I will enter therein and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord. The righteous shall go in through it.

I will give thanks to you, for you heard me, and you became my salvation. The stone that the builders rejected, the same became the head of the corner, and this came about from the Lord, and it is wonderful in our eyes. This is the day the Lord made.

Let us greatly rejoice and be glad therein. O Lord, save us now. O Lord, prosper us now.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord. God is the Lord, and he revealed himself to us.

Appoint a feast for yourself, decked with branches, even to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will give thanks to you. You are my God, and I shall exalt you.

I will give thanks to you, and you heard me, and you became my salvation. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever. I will open it up for any comments or corrections.

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